

## From *de facto* to *de jure*? On Mandarin as an Official Language of Taiwan

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**Abstract** Mandarin in Taiwan has been the *de facto* official language for all intents and purposes since 1945. The announcement of the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES ACT* in 2019, for the first time, bestowed the legal status and associated rights to all languages that fit the criteria, i.e., “National language” as referred to in this Act shall mean the natural languages and sign languages used by the different ethnic groups in Taiwan [本法所稱國家語言，指臺灣各固有族群使用之自然語言及臺灣手語。]’ Mandarin and 20 other languages allegedly fit the definition. Notably, the government repeatedly emphasized that national languages are *not* official languages and that Taiwan has no official languages. This begs the question, why not take this excellent opportunity to designate a *de jure* official language or languages? Interestingly, the issue was never brought up, let alone discussed or debated. In this article, I address these thorny and sensitive issues. Specifically, I demonstrate that Mandarin, in fact, is not qualified nor suitable to be a “national language” and argue why Taiwan should instead have Mandarin as a *de jure* official language.

*When there’s an elephant in the room, introduce him.*  
— Randy Pausch, The Last Lecture<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is written with the explicit intention to be a position paper on changing the well-established status of Mandarin as the only *de facto* official language of Taiwan to that of a *de jure* official language. It is thus crucial to note that this article does not argue *against* any other language; it simply argues *for* Mandarin as a *de jure* official language, but not necessarily the *only* one. The *de jure* status of an “official language” legally *requires* the government to use the language when interacting with its people and providing public services; a “national language”, in contrast, is merely under legal protection with certain prescribed measures to promote its use (Lecomte, 2021, ii; Her & Chiang, 2022, p. 21). The crucial difference is that the use of official languages, but not necessarily national languages, in official communications is prescribed by law.

Many, if not most, citizens of Taiwan, a linguistically rich and diverse country whose official name sanctioned by the constitution is *Zhōnghuá mínguó* [中華民國] Republic of China (ROC), naively assume that Mandarin, commonly known as *Guóyǔ* [國語], literally “national language”, is the official language, unaware of the fact that Taiwan has never legally designated Mandarin or any other language as an *official* language. However, both in Taiwan and in China, or the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to be legally accurate, the Mandarin language, known in China as *Pǔtōnghuà* [普通話], literally “common language”, for all intents and purposes, functions as the official language, as China, interestingly, has likewise never legally sanctioned its official status.

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<sup>1</sup> This talk by Randy Pausch is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5\\_MqicxSo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo)

Singapore, officially the Republic of Singapore, another country with the majority of its population being ethnic Chinese, is in stark contrast with Taiwan and China, as Mandarin, along with English, Malay, and Tamil, has always been a *de jure* official language since the nation's establishment in 1965. Yet, ironically, the dominant language in Singapore, politically, economically, and socially, is by now English, as the vitality of Mandarin has been on a steady decline for the last three decades. In the 2020 census, English has replaced Mandarin as the language most used at home (Lin, 2021).

If we borrow Kachru's (1985) three concentric circles model of English in the world and adopt it for Mandarin, then no doubt Taiwan and China are the only two members of the Inner Circle, while Singapore, Hong Kong, and Macao belong to the Outer Circle, with the rest of the world all in the Expanding Circle. However, while the facts mentioned above are all consistent with Mandarin as the sole *de facto* official language and also the most dominant language of Taiwan, none provides a strong motivation for changing its status quo to *de jure*. After all, only four of the Inner Circle countries of English, i.e., Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and most recently, the US, have legally designated English as an official language; the UK and Australia have not. The central goal of the rest of the article is thus to offer rational arguments for changing the status quo of Mandarin in Taiwan to a *de jure* official language.

The organization of the article is as follows. Sect. 4.2 offers a brief description of Taiwan's linguistic history and its contemporary linguistic landscape. Core arguments for Mandarin to gain the *de jure* status as an official language are laid out in Sect. 4.3. In Sect. 4.4, I discuss the anticipated objections and concerns and defend the position advocated. Sect. 4.5 concludes the article with a brief summary and suggestions regarding concrete steps toward reaching a consensus among citizens and the subsequent legal implementation.

## **4.2 A Brief History of Taiwan's Languages**

Taiwan's history of languages is a tapestry woven from threads of indigenous Austronesian languages, European languages such as Dutch and Spanish, Japanese, and Sinitic languages, mainly Southern Min, Hakka, and Mandarin, but also other varieties. We offer a brief account in this section, outlining the key factors in historical development leading to Taiwan's linguistic landscape today.

### ***4.2.1 Taiwan: The Austronesian Homeland***

It is well-established that the expansion of the Austronesian language family, which consists of more than 1200 languages across Oceania and Island Southeast Asia, began in Taiwan (e.g., Gray et al., 2009). Among the most crucial evidence is that most of the indigenous Formosan languages are the oldest and most diverse languages that have existed for some 6,000 years (Blust, 2013). Comparative perspectives on the origins and linguistic significance of Austronesian languages are discussed in Chapter Three. However, after some 400 years of colonial rule by various foreign powers, only 16 are still living and have been formally recognized by law: Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saaroa, Saisiyat, Sakizaya, Seediq, Thao, Truku, Tsou, Tao, while a few others are trying to regain vitality and formal recognition.

#### 4.2.2 The European Influences

Though the historical name ‘Formosa’ for Taiwan is credited to the Portuguese explorers who reached the shores of Taiwan on their way to the Japanese islands and named it “Ilha Formosa”, literally “beautiful island”, the Portuguese did not settle in Taiwan. Rather, in 1624, the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in southern Taiwan marked the beginning of Taiwan’s colonial history, which, arguably, did not fully end until Taiwan had its first presidential election by popular vote in 1996. During the colonization by the Dutch in the south of Taiwan from 1625–1662 and the Spanish in the north from 1626–1642, the respective languages, Dutch and Spanish, did leave their marks in the Indigenous languages in the form of loanwords.

The influence of Dutch and Spanish as *lingua francas* was soon replaced by Southern Min, the native language of the founder Koxinga and the ruling class of the Kingdom of Tungning, which lasted only some twenty years, from 1662 to the Qing Dynasty’s conquest in 1683. Taiwan was under Qing rule for more than two centuries, from 1683 to 1895. The Qing policy of Taiwan’s Sinicization encouraged Han Chinese migration to Taiwan, which led to significant demographic, hence cultural and linguistic, changes. Most of the migrants were Southern Min speakers from Fijian, followed by Hakka speakers from Guangdong. The dominance of the Southern Min language continued until the arrival of the *KUOMINGTANG* (KMT), while Hakka also gained significant ground as the second most important language. Consequently, the indigenous Austronesian languages have been on a steady decline to this day, with many driven to extinction on the way.

#### 4.2.3 Fifty Years of Japanese Colonization

In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to the Empire of Japan after the Qing Dynasty lost the First Sino-Japanese War, aka the War of Jiawu, and Japanese, surely a foreign language in spite of a partially shared lexicon, became the *de facto* official language for the next fifty years. The ultimate goal of the colonial government’s National Language Policy was to integrate the colony into the Japanese homeland through the promotion of Japanese as an all-around superior language (Heylen, 2012, p. 33). The policy went through three stages with ever-increasing intensity: early experimentation (1895–1918), assimilation education (1919–1936), and finally, the Japanization Movement, which lasted from 1937 when Japan invaded China and started the Second Sino-Japanese War till losing Taiwan to KMT in 1945. During the war, more extreme measures under the language policy were implemented to enhance imperial loyalty, such as suppressing Taiwanese languages in publications and in public spaces while encouraging Taiwanese to adopt Japanese names and to use Japanese in public and at home.

In a 1915 census, 96% of the Southern Min population spoke Southern Min dialects (Yap, 2018). In a 1935 census, 79.75% of the population was of Southern Min origin, 14.88% Hakka, and 5.37% Indigenous (Wang, 1993). At the end of the fifty-year rule, Japanese was primarily used in schools and government offices; elsewhere, in public or at home, its use was not widespread (Huang, 1993, p. 36), with around 30% of the population able to speak the language (Yap, 2018, p. 260). The dominant language in Taiwan before the KMT takeover was clearly still Taiwanese, not Japanese. Few people spoke Mandarin; however, due to the Mandarin Baihuawen Movement as a literary movement in Taiwan from 1923 to 1937, which promoted written Mandarin

(Heylen, 2012, pp. 96, 175), many Taiwanese writers used written Mandarin as the primary medium (Chen, 1996, p. 448).

#### 4.2.4 After the Chinese Nationalist Takeover

Compared with the Japanese colonial language policy, the KMT used the same policy name, National Language Policy, but much more aggressively promoted Mandarin as not only the official language but, in fact, the only language in public spaces prior to 1987 when martial law was finally lifted, marking Taiwan's transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. During this 40-year post-war era, cross-strait communication between Taiwan and Mainland China was completely cut off, and the baby boomers and their children unwittingly created a distinctive variety of Mandarin, dubbed "Taiwan Mandarin" by the professional linguistics community. In his 1993 monumental book on the sociology of language in Taiwan, Hsuan-Fan Huang declares:

Over the past forty years, the Mandarin spoken in Taiwan has naturally evolved from the integration of different linguistic groups and developed distinct and unique characters. This is a language we should be proud of. [台灣地區不同的語族四十年來自然而然整合出來的國語已具有明顯而獨特的面貌。這個語言是我們應該自傲的語言。] (Huang 1993, p. 5)

The KMT's policy had marginalized Japanese so effectively that by this time, Japanese practically ceased to be a functional language in Taiwanese society; local languages likewise suffered, though to a lesser degree. Meanwhile, voices and efforts to revitalize local languages began to surge. Nonetheless, it would take another thirty years for all the local languages to gain lawful status as Taiwan's national languages when, in 2018, the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES ACT* (DNLA) was finally passed by the Legislative Yuan.

The success story of Taiwan Mandarin, where success is in the sense that it was able to emerge and then take such deep roots in merely two generations, is due to several significant sociolinguistic factors besides the effective and repressive top-down language policy. The first factor is obvious, i.e., Mandarin is a Sinitic language like Southern Min (now better known as Taiwanese, or Tâi-gí) and Hakka; the three Sinitic languages thus share many typological features. Furthermore, the three languages also share the same Chinese writing system and a very similar cultural tradition that goes back thousands of years. All this makes learning and acquiring Mandarin much easier for most Taiwanese than an entirely foreign language such as Japanese or English.

The second crucial factor, as pointed out by Her (2009), is the great diversity of languages spoken by the more than one million military personnel and civilians who moved to Taiwan after the war, an important fact often overlooked by commentators and researchers. Thus, contrary to the widespread and misguided stereotype, the greatest majority of the settlers from Mainland China were not native speakers of Beijing Mandarin or the so-called Standard Mandarin. Table 4.1 shows the native places of these settlers as recorded in the 1956 ROC census.

**Table 4.1** 1956 Taiwan Census of 928,279 Mainlanders' Native Places (Her 2009, p. 386)

本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%	本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%	本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%

江蘇省 Jiangsu	95836	10.32	陝西省 Shanxi	6389	0.69	南京市 Nanjing	12491	1.35
浙江省 Zhejiang	114830	12.37	甘肅省 Gansu	1358	0.15	上海市 Shanghai	16179	1.74
安徽省 Anhui	44533	4.80	寧夏省 Ningxia	88	0.01	北平市 Beiping	7850	0.85
江西省 Jiangxi	30666	3.30	青海省 Qinghai	131	0.01	青島市 Qingdao	5777	0.62
湖北省 Hubei	36184	3.90	綏遠省 Suiyuan	383	0.04	天津市 Tianjin	5293	0.57
湖南省 Hunan	54154	5.83	察哈爾 Chahar	550	0.06	重慶市 Chongqing	994	0.11
四川省 Sichuan	36369	3.92	熱河省 Rehe	789	0.08	大連市 Dalian	600	0.06
西康省 Xikang	313	0.03	遼寧省 Liaoning	11220	1.21	哈爾濱 Harbin	490	0.05
福建省 Fujian	142520	15.35	安東省 Andong	1623	0.17	漢口市 Hankou	1618	0.17
廣東省 Guangdong	92507	9.97	遼北省 Liaobai	1773	0.19	廣州市 Guangzhou	924	0.10
廣西省 Guangxi	11620	1.25	吉林省 Jilin	2060	0.22	西安市 Xi'an	115	0.01
雲南省 Yunnan	5716	0.62	松江省 Songjiang	387	0.04	瀋陽市 Shenyang	2264	0.24
貴州省 Guizhou	4545	0.49	合江省 Hejiang	192	0.02	海南 Hainan	1817	0.20
河北省 Hebei	36124	3.89	黑龍江 Heilongjiang	556	0.06	西藏 Tibet	16	0.00
山東省 Shandong	90068	9.70	嫩江省 Nenjiang	479	0.05	蒙古 Mongolia	338	0.04
河南省 Henan	41674	4.49	興安省 Xing'an	98	0.01	未詳 Unknown	219	0.02
山西省 Shanxi	5282	0.57	新疆省 Xinjiang	277	0.03			

According to *Ethnologue*, China has nearly 300 languages and dialects spoken by dozens of ethnic groups of at least nine different language families. Though accurate data is unavailable, the fact that these post-war settlers were from all across China indicates that they were native speakers of a great number of languages and speakers of Beijing Mandarin were a tiny minority. Thus, these first-generation Mainlanders and their Taiwanese counterparts are much alike in confronting Beijing Mandarin as a second language. Her (2009) thus contends that under KMT's intense policy, Mandarin in Taiwan first underwent massive pidginization, heavily influenced by local languages, especially Taiwanese, which led to an even more massive acquisition process similar to creolization among the baby boomers born after the war and educated almost

exclusively in the pidginized Mandarin. The boomers became the first-generation native speakers of Taiwan Mandarin.

#### 4.2.5 Taiwan's Linguistic Landscape Today

After more than 70 years of linguistic development, Taiwan Mandarin, besides being the *de facto* official language, has been nativized in all linguistic dimensions and has become the most dominant language of the land (Her, 2010; Khoo & Her, to appear). More importantly, Taiwan Mandarin has also enregistered into a socially identifiable variety that marks a distinctive Taiwanese identity (Su, 2018).

Legally, according to the interpretation of the Ministry of Culture, Mandarin and other 20 local languages share equal status as national languages, sanctioned by the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES ACT*; see Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2** Taiwan's National Languages

Taiwan's <i>de jure</i> National Languages	
Sign Languages (1)	Taiwan Sign Language
Austronesian languages (16)	Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saaroa, Saisiyat, Sakizaya, Seediq, Thao, Truku, Tsou, Tao
Sinitic languages (4)	Mandarin, Taiwanese (Southern Min) Hakka, Matsu (Eastern Min)

As prescribed in the *CURRICULUM GUIDELINES OF 12-YEAR BASIC EDUCATION*, put forth by the Ministry of Education (MOE), eight foreign languages, as shown in Table 4.3, are formally recognized in Taiwan's 9-year compulsory education, in addition to the 21 national languages.

**Table 4.3** Taiwan's Recognized Languages in Basic Education

Taiwan's Recognized Languages in Basic Education	
European Languages (1)	English
Southeast Asian Languages (7)	Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Malay, Thai, Vietnamese

English is a required course, and the respective official languages of seven Southeast Asian countries are listed as options alongside the 20 non-Mandarin national languages. Students are required to select one of the 20+7 options of language courses. The inclusion and recognition of these seven languages are largely due to the significant number of recent immigrants from these countries and their offerings.

Mandarin thus stands out uniquely among national languages as the only language that students must take a course on throughout the 12-year basic education. On the linguistic landscape of Taiwan, it is also the only language that enjoys the *de facto* status as the nation's official language in public communications and basic education. "When there's an elephant in the room, introduce him," as Randy Pausch famously said in *The Last Lecture*. Now that the elephant has been introduced as such, the next section argues for the formal recognition of it being an elephant.

### 4.3 Arguments for Mandarin as a *de jure* Official Language

In Taiwan's "blue vs. green" partisan politics, the stereotypical public perception in terms of language ideology is that the blue camp led by the KMT is more pro-Mandarin, and the green camp led by the *DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE PARTY* (DPP) is more protective and in favor of other local languages. Yet, we shall demonstrate that beneath the superficial stereotype, it is actually the DPP, when in power, that has explicitly and implicitly shown support for the idea that Mandarin should be made a *de jure* official language. The KMT, on the other hand, seems to have been content with Mandarin's *de facto* status, perhaps knowing that no challengers are anywhere in sight.

#### 4.3.1 Language Policy under the First DPP Government

In the year 2000, the DPP, led by Shui-Bian Chen [陳水扁], won the presidential election, ending 55 years of KMT dominance in Taiwanese politics since the end of World War II. His best-known language policy was put forth by the Executive Yuan in the 2002 document titled the *CHALLENGE 2008 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN* (2002–2007), where it is clearly stated that "the government should elevate the status of English to that of a quasi-official language within six years", and concrete measures were laid out. Such a policy statement suggests in no uncertain terms that English would receive official recognition of sorts and hold a significant role in official communication and affairs and as expected, begs the question: what is Taiwan's official language now?

The then-Premier Si-Kun You [游錫堃] clearly stated publicly that though it was not legally sanctioned, undeniably Mandarin was already the official language in practice and function. More importantly, he further suggested that Taiwan should follow the 112 countries that had designated official languages in their constitutions and move toward making constitutional amendments in this regard (Shen, 2003). It is noteworthy that You's political inclination has never been pro-China; quite the contrary, he was one of the green politicians blacklisted by China as one of the 'stubborn' pro-Taiwan independence hardliners.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Language Policy under the Second DPP Government

Ching-te Lai [賴清德], the current President, also a pro-Taiwan independence hardliner, first promoted a policy to make English the second official language in the city of Tainan while he was the mayor. Given the unmistakable *de facto* official status of Mandarin in Tainan, the *first* official language that Lai had in mind, which logically must exist as a necessary condition for the promotion of a *second* official language, can thus only be Mandarin. Lai then brought this policy to the central government in 2017 when President Ying-Wen Tsai [蔡英文] appointed him the Premier. Subsequently, the policy, due to the bi-partisan opposition from legislators and serious concerns raised by scholars, had its name changed twice, first to *2030 BILINGUAL NATION* in 2018, then to *2030 BILINGUAL POLICY* in 2022. However, throughout President Tsai's second term, the implementation of the bilingual policy continued, and the goal of making

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<sup>2</sup> This news item is available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-says-it-will-hold-supporters-taiwans-independence-criminally-responsible-2021-11-05/>

English the second official language remained behind the scenes (Her, 2022a). In other words, it may have been pushed to the back burner, but certainly not off the table.

The Blueprint for Developing Taiwan into a *BILINGUAL NATION* by 2030 thus states, “The promotion of English as the second official language will be considered after 2030, based on the review of the implementation results of the bilingual policy.” The official document titled *BILINGUAL 2030* further justifies the promotion of English based on the fact that ‘Taiwan already has the advantage of using Mandarin.’ Lai and Tsai’s bilingual policy, whether purposely or unwittingly, thus explicitly solidifies that Mandarin is Taiwan’s first and only *de facto* official language and implicitly promotes the changing of its status to *de jure* so that English can then follow suit. All this shows that even hardliners in the green camp are not only comfortable with the concept of Mandarin as a *de jure* official language but, in fact, have been promoting the idea either explicitly or implicitly.

#### 4.3.3 Arguments Provided by MOE’s English Promotion Committee

The best and most systematic arguments for Mandarin to be a *de jure* official language came rather unexpectedly from a 2019 research project report commissioned by the English Promotion Committee, a committee organized in October 2017 by the MOE upon the instruction of Premier Lai when he announced the national policy to promote English as the second official language. The PI of the project and the chief writer of the report, titled “Evaluation report on the policy of making English our nation’s second official language,” is a committee member Professor Vincent Wuchang Chang [張武昌]. His report lists nine precise conditions that countries with English as an official language have met, as shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4** Conditions for English to Be a Nation’s Official Language

Conditions for English as a Nation’s Official Language	
1	Colonial background in <i>English</i>
2	<i>English</i> and the national languages belong to the same language family
3	Established <i>English</i> -friendly environment
4	Existing official documents in <i>English</i>
5	<i>English</i> as a practical language, not merely a subject of study
6	Substantial financial investment in <i>English</i>
7	Promotion of <i>English</i> as an official language often based on considerations of the nation’s survival and ethnic unity
8	Established cultural mindset and logical thinking for listening, speaking, reading, and writing in <i>English</i>
9	Foundations of <i>English</i> documents related to national operations and societal needs

Needless to say, Chang’s (2019) report is able to demonstrate convincingly that Taiwan does not meet any of the conditions. Note that the main content of the report was presented to the Premier as the MOE recommendation in late 2018 prior to its final submission as the project report. Perhaps sensing the Premier’s resolve, the final report then made a concrete suggestion for the government to move toward its ultimate goal: “Establish a *NATIONAL BILINGUAL* and *BICULTURAL COMMITTEE* or a similar language promotion committee.” This suggestion was taken so seriously by the Premier that the English Promotion Committee was subsequently dissolved, and the Executive



Yuan quickly passed a draft bill *ACT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BILINGUAL NATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER* and sent it to the Legislative Yuan immediately. As mentioned, this policy met opposition from legislators of both camps and even stronger opposition from teachers' unions, student groups, and academics. The bill thus struggled in the Legislative Yuan from the very beginning and is now pending negotiations between the parties. See Her (2022a) and Liao et al. (2024) for a more detailed account.

Therefore, the nine conditions and the final suggestion put forth in this report are highly instrumental to our issue regarding making Mandarin a *de jure* official language. All we need to do is replace all instances of “English” with “Mandarin” and examine the results; see Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5** Conditions for Mandarin to be Taiwan's Official Language

<b>Conditions for Mandarin as Taiwan's Official Language</b>	
1	Colonial background in <i>Mandarin</i>
2	<i>Mandarin</i> and the national languages belong to the same language family
3	Established <i>Mandarin</i> -friendly environment
4	Existing official documents in <i>Mandarin</i>
5	<i>Mandarin</i> as a practical language, not merely a subject of study
6	Substantial financial investment in <i>Mandarin</i>
7	Promotion of <i>Mandarin</i> as an official language often based on considerations of the nation's survival and ethnic unity
8	Established cultural mindset and logical thinking for listening, speaking, reading, and writing in <i>Mandarin</i>
9	Foundations of <i>Mandarin</i> documents related to national operations and societal needs

All nine conditions quite straightforwardly reflect the reality in Taiwan and require no further explanation, except condition 7, which does need some justification. So, is Mandarin as an official language a consideration of Taiwan's survival and ethnic unity?

First, consider generative AI, a technological breakthrough likely to be as impactful as the industrial revolution, if not more. Yet, generative AI performs differently in different languages, as there are high-resource languages like English and low-resource languages like the indigenous languages in the developing world (e.g., Kshetri, 2024). Choudhury (2023) reports on a Microsoft study by Joshi et al. (2020) that languages of the world can be divided into six groups based on the amount of digital resources in that language available for use by generative AI. English and Mandarin are among the 25 languages in the top group dubbed Winners. Mandarin is thus a highly valuable asset for Taiwan to survive and thrive in the age of AI; losing that competitive edge would be an unthinkable disaster.

Second, consider Taiwan's 9-year compulsory education. Article 21 of the Constitution, which, incidentally, is written in Mandarin, states that “The people shall have the right and the duty of receiving citizens' education.” Article 159 further states that “All citizens shall have equal opportunity to receive an education.” Her (2022b, p. 15) argues that the equal opportunity protected by the Constitution is being violated in the 12-year compulsory basic education due to the promotion of English as an additional or alternative medium of instruction under the *2030 BILINGUAL POLICY*.

In compulsory education, Mandarin as the language of instruction and learning instrument for non-English subjects has the least built-in advantages and disadvantages and is the

language least likely to cause class inequality. Imagine that textbooks for non-English subjects in compulsory education, such as social studies textbooks, are presented in a mixed Mandarin and Taiwanese, mixed Mandarin and English, all Taiwanese or all English manner, which will immediately cause some students to have learning advantages and other students to have built-in advantages and disadvantages at the starting line. Such textbooks will inevitably be rejected by the Ministry of Education. However, what ‘bilingual education’ promotes is the use of English as the classroom language and learning tool for subjects, which is a policy that creates inequality in education opportunities. Previously, students who were weak in English only had a disadvantage in this single subject, but such a disadvantage is now replicated in all subjects [在國民教育中，華語文作為非語言科目的授課語文與學習工具，是最不具內建優劣勢、最不易造成階級複製的語文。試想，國民教育中非英語學科的教科書，例如社會課本，若以華文臺文夾雜、華文英文夾雜、全臺文或全英文的方式呈現學科內容，在起跑點上即造成部分學生的學習優勢與其他學生的先天劣勢，勢必遭教育部退審。但「雙語教育」所推動的正是以英語作為學科的課室語言與學習工具，正是一個製造不平等的政策。英語弱勢的學生原本僅在此單一學科的弱勢，立即複製於所有學科。] (Her 2022b, p. 15)

Having Mandarin as a *de jure* official language can effectively eliminate discrimination due to the choice of classroom language in the 12-year basic education.

Last but most certainly not least, consider national and ethnic unity. In the past eight years, President Tsai often called for unity; likewise, President Lai has repeatedly made the same appeal for unity after winning the election. To the best of my knowledge, all such appeals for unity by the two DPP presidents have always been made in Mandarin, and for good reasons, as politicians are surely the most sensitive and careful about language choice. An excellent example is that in the only televised presidential debate of the 2024 election, candidate Lai used Mandarin almost exclusively for the obvious reason to appeal to the widest range of voters. Yet, seven months later, President Lai, also the party chair of the DPP, used Taiwanese only throughout his address to the DPP National Party Congress, a language choice widely criticized by opposition parties (Lin & Chang, 2024). Clearly, no other language is better suited than Mandarin for Taiwan’s national and ethnic unity.

Perhaps notably only to concerned linguists, throughout the DPP government’s campaign for its Mandarin-English bilingual movement, there have been sporadic voices from the deep green end of the political spectrum, e.g., the Taiwan Statebuilding Party (TSP), that expressed objection to Mandarin as the presumed first official language and tried to make the case for Taiwanese and other local languages instead (Taiwan Statebuilding, 2020).<sup>3</sup> Such faint voices have fallen on deaf ears among leaders in the green camp itself, let alone elsewhere. The decline and marginalization of the TSP in the 2024 election and the fact that Lai and his running mate used Mandarin far more than their two KMT opponents in televised policy presentations and debates are all meaningful indicators of Mandarin, or Taiwan Mandarin, to be accurate, as a language of national unity.

Finally, recall the report’s suggestion for the government to set up a “National Bilingual and Bicultural Committee”. That is exactly what the KMT government did as part of the efforts to promote Mandarin in Taiwan. We are, of course, referring to the National Language Promotion Committee, which operated under the MOE and was

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<sup>3</sup> There are three inescapable ironies in this short article by Taiwan Statebuilding. First, the entire article is written in Mandarin Chinese, the very language that the article is fiercely opposed to. Second, there are at least 20 other local languages, yet the article calls for a ‘bilingual’ nation still, thus reducing the 20 local languages to merely one. Third, the article insists that ‘The Mandarin language system is a fundamental obstacle to internationalization’, completely oblivious to Mandarin’s high-resource reality in the AI era.

eventually dissolved in 2013 for the obvious reason that it had so successfully and completely fulfilled its mission (Khoo & Her, to appear).

#### **4.3.4 Interim Summary**

All arguments presented above converge on the most obvious fact that Mandarin is deeply entrenched as the *de facto* official language, and it is time to formally acknowledge this reality. A good analogy is a couple that have been living in a *de facto* marriage for decades. Families, friends, and the society at large treat them as a married couple, many unaware they are not legally married. Compared with a prototypical legally married couple, the only difference is that the former is without a marriage license, which understandably may cause some inconveniences and misunderstandings at times. The most sensible once-and-for-all solution is surely to get a marriage license, in spite of the small number of families and friends that have been against the couple's relationship from the beginning. Ignoring the reality would not change the reality and may, in fact, enhance the reality instead. Mandarin in Taiwan is such a case.

More than 20 years ago, the then-Premier You Si-Kun urged Taiwan to follow the 112 countries that had designated official languages.<sup>4</sup> The current DPP government should seriously consider their faithful old comrade's advice, especially given the government and the President's implicit presumption that Mandarin is Taiwan's first official language in their language policy.

### **4.4 Expected Concerns and Objections**

If the reader is convinced by the rational arguments given so far and thus considers changing Mandarin's status quo a straightforward matter, they would be much mistaken. There are good reasons why this issue was deliberately shunned by the MOC when promoting the legislation of national languages and why it was never formally proposed by any other political party. Anyone familiar with the politics and sociology of language in Taiwan would know that this is bound to be an emotionally charged issue. Some of those who still consider Mandarin the Chinese oppressor of the local languages would probably see this as rubbing salt in their never-ending wound and see such a proposal indignantly as the final straw.

Against that backdrop, as merely an individual scholar and a citizen, I shall, to the best of my ability, address the anticipated concerns and objections with rational arguments and must leave the mending of the wounded hearts to those with the necessary power and tools.

#### **4.4.1 Mandarin Already a National Language**

The most likely objection is due to the presumed equal legal status of Mandarin and all other local languages as national languages under the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES ACT* (DNLA). In other words, why is it necessary to single out Mandarin and assign it an additional or different status as an official language? The immediate

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<sup>4</sup> According to Wikipedia (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_language)), the number of such countries is now 178.

answer is that, as stated earlier repeatedly, Mandarin has been Taiwan's only *de facto* official language for decades already; no other national languages have this status. More importantly, Mandarin's status as a national language is, in fact, questionable and should be challenged.

First, we must acknowledge the fact that the DNLA does not specify a list of national languages; instead, it only gives a definition of national languages. That Mandarin fits the definition is only an informal interpretation of the Ministry of Culture (MOC) in its 2022 *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGE REPORT*.<sup>5</sup> Article 3 of the DNLA states, "National language" as referred to in this Act shall mean the natural languages and sign languages used by the different ethnic groups in Taiwan.'

Note that the official English translation quoted above is sadly not accurate at all. First of all, the sign language (singular, not plural) referred to is specifically Taiwan Sign Language. In addition, the ethnic groups referred to must be Taiwan's *gùyǒu zúqún* [固有族群], hence only those ethnic groups that have *historically* or *traditionally* been living in Taiwan. The Southeast Asian ethnic groups that have immigrated to Taiwan in recent decades are thus not included. A more fitting translation is thus "native ethnic groups." While Taiwan Mandarin is indeed by now a localized or nativized variety of Mandarin, can we then deduce that the Chinese settlers after the war and their offspring constitute a native ethnic group? Here is the rationale given in the MOC report: "Its current population size and the number of generations can already be seen as the critical point for native groups." Yet, it can be easily argued otherwise, as population size is never a consideration, for some Indigenous groups, e.g., Hla'alua and Kanakanavu, have less than a thousand people,<sup>6</sup> and three to four generations in some 75 years can hardly be seen as native. Mandarin is thus a debatable borderline case at best in terms of the ethnic group it is associated with.

More importantly, having Mandarin as a national language dilutes the spirit of the DNLA. To start with, unlike other national languages, Mandarin needs no further protection, revitalization, or documentation. It is thus meaningless to have it as a national language. Furthermore, Article 4 of the DNLA states, "All national languages are equal, and citizens shall not be discriminated against or restricted in their use of national languages." If this equal status is to be taken seriously, and legally, there is no reason not to, then all 21 national languages immediately obtain the status as *de facto* languages, just like Mandarin. In the process of legislating the DNLA, Li-chiun Cheng [鄭麗君], the then-Minister of MOC, more than once stated emphatically to the public that the aim of this law was *not* to establish them as official languages for government use. The fact that no other languages have such a *de facto* status and are not likely to in the near future means all national languages are not equal, thus violating the law as long as Mandarin is regarded as a national language.

Finally, such a dilemma already presented itself in the MOE curriculum committee when deliberating the required language courses in the *CURRICULUM GUIDELINES OF 12-YEAR BASIC EDUCATION* (Lin, 2020). Article 4, item 2, of the DNLA states, "The central supervisory agency for education shall implement mandatory classes in national languages at all stages of compulsory education." The Guidelines already have Mandarin as a required course; thus, given Mandarin as a national language, no more courses on other national languages need to be offered to be compliant with the law. The fact that, in practice, upon further interpretation by the MOC, both Mandarin and

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<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.moc.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=167&s=95744](https://www.moc.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=167&s=95744)

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.cip.gov.tw/en/index.html#tab\\_16](https://www.cip.gov.tw/en/index.html#tab_16)

at least another national language are required in basic education again reflects the reality that Mandarin sticks out like a sore thumb among national languages.

What I am suggesting here is thus something similar to the Canadian model, where English and French were legislated as official languages in the 1960s, based on the fact they already had the *de facto* status, and the adoption of the *INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ACT* in 2019 implicitly confers the status of national languages on Indigenous languages (Hudon, 2023). Taiwan already has the DNLA formally recognizing national languages, additionally it also has the *INDEGENOUS LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT ACT* of 2017 for Indigenous languages (as discussed previously in Chapter One). The next logical step is to confer the formal status of an official language to Mandarin, the *de facto* official language.

#### 4.4.2 Mandarin: Language-as-Problem

A more substantial and more easily understandable concern is due to a long-standing view that sees Mandarin as a problem, an invasion, or an enemy even, to all other local languages (e.g., Tiun, 2020; Ang, 2023a). A problem is to be corrected or resolved, and an enemy is to be pushed back or put down. To bestow Mandarin an official status seems to further strengthen its power and would make it more of a problem or an even more powerful force against the survival and revitalization of all other local languages.

In the field of language policy and planning (LPP), one of the most influential models is Ruiz's (1984) framework of three-way orientations: language-as-problem, language-as-rights, and language-as-resource and its recent extensions (e.g., Kaveh, 2023). As pointed out by Chang and Her (2024), in the DPP government's language policies, the role of Mandarin is ambivalent, with all three orientations gently stated. It is characterized as a resource like English in the *BILINGUAL POLICY*; its rights are protected by the DNLA as a national language, but it is considered a problem in promoting the use of other national languages. Mandarin is, indeed, rightfully all three.

Under our proposal for Mandarin as an official language, its rights, especially in basic education, are protected, and its resources, especially in the AI arena, will be enhanced. So, the only issue left to consider is whether it will become more of a problem or less. It is also possible that it will be uneventful and thus unimpactful; after all, the change is merely formal, not substantial, given that the language is and has been practically the official language. But this is highly improbable as there will be reactions, huge reactions. I shall thus venture to argue that such a change may in fact make Mandarin less of a problem.

First, consider the DNLA, the most important law that guarantees the maintenance, revival, and development of all national languages. Logically and legally, Mandarin can either be or not be a national language. A choice must be made. Unfortunately, the MOC took the easy but dishonest way, which renders the concept of national languages vacuous. A robust elephant and a tiny river trout are lumped together for protection. This creates an effect that both can be ignored: if you must pretend not to see the elephant, you can certainly only pretend to see the trout. This is precisely what happened under the *2030 BILINGUAL NATION POLICY*, a policy fundamentally contradictory to the policy of national languages (e.g., Her, 2022a).

For Taiwan to be a *bilingual* nation by 2030, by definition, it will have two dominant languages of equal status: English and Mandarin in this case; yet, Taiwan, defined in accordance with the DNLA, is *multilingual* with at least 21 languages. Adding to this irony is the timing of the two: the legislation of the DNLA and the

planning of the 2030 Bilingual Nation occurred simultaneously in early 2019 as if completely oblivious to one another. Under the same government, given two contradictory policies, if one is serious and real, the other can only be mere lip service at best (Chang & Her, 2024). The implementation of Mandarin-English bilingual education and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has been so aggressive that news related to this policy has dominated all other educational issues since 2019 till this day. The situation was so bad that the Taiwan Languages and Literature Society (TLLS) launched a public petition with four objections and two recommendations.<sup>7</sup>

#### **TLLS' Four Objections to the 2030 BILINGUAL POLICY**

1. "Bilingual Nation" runs counter to the spirit of the Development of National Languages Act and disregards the reality of Taiwan as a multilingual society [「雙語國家」與「國家語言發展法」的精神背道而馳，嚴重忽視台灣是多元語言社會的事實].
2. "Bilingual Nation" is language planning with misguided values that surely threatens Taiwan's identity and undermines its linguistic ecology [「雙語國家」是價值錯亂的語言規劃，必然危及台灣的主體意識，破壞台灣的語言生態].
3. The planning of "Bilingual Nation" in the education system is unfeasible and destined to fail [「雙語國家」在教育體系中的規劃缺乏可行性，將會徒勞無功].
4. The "Bilingual Nation" policy breeds social injustice and language discrimination [「雙語國家」政策中的社會不公平及語言歧視問題].

#### **TLLS' Two Recommendations on Language Planning**

1. Adopt "Multilingual Taiwan, English-Friendly" as the goal and abandon the "English Nation" fantasy [以「多語臺灣，英語友善」為目標，摒棄「英語國家」的幻想].
2. Plan for a "Multilingual Nation" that puts indigenous languages first to achieve a sustainable linguistic ecology [規劃本土語言優先的「多語言國家」，達成生態永續的正面語言規劃].

Dishonesty breeds dishonesty, the 2030 BILINGUAL NATION policy is evidence of that. The DNLA can be and should be an honest progressive language policy, but the ill-advised inclusion of Mandarin impairs its spirit and undermines its seriousness. The position advocated here requires honesty, and honesty is the best policy. Removing Mandarin from the DNLA's protection would streamline the law's implementation and enforcement and thus benefit all legitimate national languages. An honest language policy also means that Taiwan recognizes Mandarin as a *de jure* official language.

#### **4.4.3 The Mathew Effect or the Catfish Effect?**

If history can tell us anything, it is that the linguistic dynamic in a multilingual society like Taiwan is continually changing. The DNLA and the 2030 BILINGUAL POLICY are the best examples. This article proposes another change. If this change does materialize, some will worry about the possible consequent Matthew effect: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matthew 25:29, King James version). The concern is that Mandarin may thus become even more detrimental to other Taiwanese languages.

However, as I have argued above, the consequence may more likely be the opposite, for removing Mandarin from national languages frees up the DNLA and

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<sup>7</sup> More than 1,700 citizens endorsed the petition; among them, more than 400 are academics and teachers. See [http://www.twlls.org.tw/NEWS\\_20220221.php](http://www.twlls.org.tw/NEWS_20220221.php)

allows it to exert its full legal potential. As stated at the beginning of the article, though Mandarin has been the only *de facto* official language, we only argue for it to be *an* official language and have no intention to argue against any other language. Proponents of any other language may do the same and put forth their arguments for the people and government to consider. Thus, there may well be a Catfish effect instead.

In Norway, live sardines are several times more expensive than frozen ones, and are valued for better texture and flavor. It was said that only one ship could bring live sardines home, and the shipmaster kept his method a secret. After he died, people found that there was one catfish in the tank. The catfish keeps swimming, and the sardines try to avoid this predator. This increased level of activity keeps the sardines active instead of becoming sedentary, according to Vince from the *Catfish* film. (Catfish effect, Wikipedia)

I am of the view that the animosity and bitterness some of my fellow citizens, academics, and politicians hold against Mandarin will never go away unless the respective roles of Taiwan Mandarin and Taiwanese are reversed.<sup>8</sup> Yet, such sentiments and views are often hidden beneath the surface, away from the public eye. My proposal, if stirring the pot enough, will at least generate discussions and debates, where different views, moderate or extreme, can all be presented for public scrutiny. That in itself is a healthy sign of a vibrant democracy. Should the proposal be legally adopted, it will also set a concrete path for other languages to strive for.

## 4.5 Suggestions and Conclusions

This article proposes that Taiwan should change the *de facto* status of Mandarin as an official language to that of *de jure*. I have presented various arguments for the proposal and also attempted to answer the likely objections. The conclusion after deliberations is that honesty is the best policy, and the honest thing to do is to have Mandarin as an official language, not a national language, so that other local languages can be properly protected as national languages under the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES ACT*.

Legally, there are two options for implementation if Mandarin is to be a *de jure* official language, either by a constitutional amendment or by a special law. Again, I recommend the Canadian model to legislate a special law similar to its *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* (Hudon, 2023), but a crucial feature of the law should be room for additional official languages. Surely, a lot of things need to happen prior to legislation.

In the Legislative Yuan, a draft bill of the *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* needs to be proposed by the executive branch of the government, a legislative party caucus, or an individual legislator with endorsement by at least 14 other legislators. The final route is via a national referendum, which, in my view, is the ideal venue, but it is also understandably the most challenging. Hence, I suggest the most pragmatic approach: a proposal by either a party caucus or an individual legislator with enough endorsements. Either way, intense lobbying and clear signs of support from academia and public opinion in the media are needed prior to the proposal and afterward.

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<sup>8</sup> Some extremists characterize Taiwan Mandarin as a Chinese language by calling it *Zhongguoyu* (中國語) or *Zhongyu* (中語) for short, literally ‘Chinese language’. Some even call it *Zhinayu* (支那語) or *Zhiyu* (支語) for short, purposely using the derogatory term *Zhina* (支那), a term used by the Japanese when it ravaged China and massacred tens of millions of Chinese during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

To raise public awareness and foster consensus, concerned parties should hold conferences or panel discussions on this issue. The most appropriate professional organizations are the two most important societies of linguists: Taiwan Languages and Literature Society (TLLS) and the Linguistic Society of Taiwan (LST). It is crucial for language experts to find common ground first before the public and the politicians can get on board.

To gain national exposure and support from the government, I suggest that the best public forum for this discussion to happen is the *DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES CONVENTION*, which, according to the DNLA and its Enforcement Rules shall in principle be held every two years and ad hoc meetings must be convened if needed. Six years have passed since the announcement of the DNLA on January 9, 2019, and the first convention was held in 2021 and the second one in 2024.<sup>9</sup> It would be ideal to have a special session devoted to the legal status of Mandarin, the elephant, in the next meeting.

To conclude, after all that has been said regarding the proposal to change Mandarin's legal status quo, knowing the politics of language in Taiwan and the perpetual hypocrisy behind the language policies and the politically correct fancy rhetoric, my only humble wish is that this article can generate some honest discussions and hopefully also healthy, rational debates.

## Competing Interests

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this chapter.

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<sup>9</sup> Transcripts of all presentations during both conventions and other information are available online at: <https://nlde.moc.gov.tw/home/zh-tw>.



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# 從 *de facto* 到 *de jure* ? 論華語為臺灣的法定官方語言

何萬順

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**摘要** 自 1945 年以來，華語（或稱國語）在臺灣一直扮演著事實上（*de facto*）的官方語角色。2019 年《國家語言發展法》的公布，首次賦予符合下列條件的「國家語言」法律上的地位和相關權利：「本法所稱國家語言，指臺灣各固有族群使用之自然語言及臺灣手語。」政府且認定華語和其他 20 種語言符合這個定義。但值得注意的是，在制訂過程中政府一再強調，國家語言並非官方語言，臺灣也沒有官方語言。這就引發了一個疑問：為什麼不趁這個絕佳的機會，指定一種或多種法律上（*de jure*）的官方語言？有趣的是，這個問題從未被提出，更別說是討論或辯論。本文中將探討這其中棘手且敏感的問題。具體而言，本文論證華語實際上並不符合，也不適合，成為「國家語言」，進而論證臺灣應該將華語作為法定的官方語言。

如果房間裡有頭大象，先介紹它。

*When there's an elephant in the room, introduce him.*

蘭迪·鮑許（Randy Pausch）：《最後的演講》*The Last Lecture*<sup>1</sup>

## 4.1 緒言

本章旨在於提出明確主張，將華語在臺灣作為唯一「事實上」（*de facto*）官方語言的既定地位，轉變為「法律上」（*de jure*）的官方語言。法律上政府與民眾互動及提供公共服務時，需使用官方語言。相對地，國家語言僅受法律保護，並透過特定措施推廣使用（Lecomte, 2021, 頁 ii；何萬順、江文瑜，2022, 頁 21）。關鍵差異在於，官方語言，但非國家語言，在與官方互動時受到法律的明確規範。因此，首先必須強調，本文雖主張將華語確立為法定的官方語言，但不排除其他語言享有同等地位的可能。

在語言豐富多元的臺灣，憲法明定的正式國名為中華民國（Republic of China），大多數民眾都天真地以為俗稱「國語」的華語（其字面意義為「國家語言」）就是官方語言，並不知臺灣從未在法律上指定華語或任何其他語言為官方語言。然而，無論在臺灣還是在中國，正式民稱為中華人民共和國（People's Republic of China），華語（在中國稱為「普通話」）實際上都扮演著官方語言的角色。有趣的是，中國也從未在法律上確立其官方地位。

新加坡，正式名稱為新加坡共和國（Republic of Singapore），是另一個以華裔人口為主的國家，卻與臺灣和中國形成鮮明對比。新加坡自 1965 年建國以來，華語與英語、馬來語和泰米爾語一直都是法定的官方語言。然而，諷刺的是，在新加坡，無論是政治、經濟還是社會層面，英語如今已成為強勢語言，華語的活力在過去三十年來持續衰退。在 2020 年的人口普查中，英語已取代華語，成為新加坡在家庭中最常使用的語言（Lin, 2021）。

如果我們借用 Kachru（1985）的世界英語為三個同心圓所構成的模式，應用於華語上，那麼毫無疑問，臺灣和中國是內圈（Inner Circle）的唯二成員，而新加坡、香港和澳門則屬於外圈（Outer Circle），其他地區則都在最外圍的擴展圈

<sup>1</sup> 演講影片請見：[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5\\_MqicxSo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo)

(Expanding Circle)。雖然上述事實都與華語作為臺灣唯一「事實上」官方語言及最主要語言的地位相符，但這些事實都未能提供足夠強烈的動機，將其現狀轉變為「法律上」的官方語言。畢竟，在英語的內圈國家中，只有加拿大、紐西蘭、愛爾蘭，以及最近的美國，在法律上將英語指定為官方語言；英國和澳洲則沒有。因此，本文的主要目的是為臺灣以華語為法定官方語言提出理性的論述。

本文的架構如下：4.2 節簡述臺灣的語言歷史及當前的語言景觀。4.3 節闡述華語應成為法定官方語言的核心論點。4.4 節討論可預期的反對意見和疑慮，進而提出辯護。4.5 節總結全文，並對於如何達成公民共識以及後續落實立法的可行步驟提出具體建議。

## 4.2 臺灣語言簡史

臺灣的語言歷史是由多種民族與語言交織而成的。其中包括原住民的南島語言、荷蘭語和西班牙語等歐洲語言、日語與三種漢語：閩南語、客語和華語。本節簡要敘述其歷史，概述導致今日臺灣語言景觀的歷史發展與關鍵因素。

### 4.2.1 臺灣：南島語系的起源地

遍布大洋洲和東南亞島嶼、有超過 1,200 種語言的南島 (Austronesian) 語系，學界普遍認為其起源地為臺灣 (例如，Gray et al., 2009)。最重要的證據之一是大多數臺灣原住民語都是最古老且最多樣化的語言，其存在已有約 6,000 年之久 (Blust, 2013)。(關於南島語系的起源及其語言學意義的比較觀點，可參閱本書第三章的討論。)然而，在經歷約 400 年不同外來政權的殖民統治後，目前僅有 16 種語言仍然存活，獲得法律正式承認：泰雅語 (Atayal)、太魯閣語 (Truku)、撒奇萊雅語 (Sakizaya)、噶瑪蘭語 (Kavalan)、阿美語 (Amis)、卑南語 (Puyuma)、達悟語 (Tao)、賽夏語 (Saisiyat)、賽德克語 (Sediq)、邵語 (Thao)、布農語 (Bunun)、鄒語 (Tsou)、魯凱語 (Rukai)、排灣語 (Paiwan)、卡那卡那富語 (Kanakanavu)、拉阿魯哇語 (Hla'alua)。而仍有其他少數一些語言則正在努力進行語言復振，並爭取正式承認。

### 4.2.2 歐洲的影響

雖然臺灣的歷史名稱「福爾摩沙」(Formosa) 歸功於前往日本列島的葡萄牙探險家，他們在途經臺灣海岸時將其命名為「Ilha Formosa」，字面意思是「美麗之島」，但葡萄牙人並未在臺灣進駐。1624 年荷蘭東印度公司抵達臺灣南部，開啟了臺灣的殖民歷史。有人認為一直到 1996 年臺灣舉行首次總統直選，這段殖民歷史才算完全結束。在 1625 年至 1662 年間荷蘭統治臺灣南部，以及 1626 年至 1642 年西班牙統治臺灣北部期間，荷蘭語和西班牙語分別以借詞的形式，在原住民語中的詞彙中留下了痕跡。

荷蘭語和西班牙語作為通用語的影響力很快就被閩南語所取代。閩南語是鄭成功及其統治階級的母語。鄭成功建立的東寧王國僅存在約二十年，從 1662 年到 1683 年清朝征服臺灣為止。臺灣在清朝統治下超過兩個世紀，從 1683 年到 1895 年。清朝推行的臺灣漢化政策鼓勵漢人移居臺灣，導致了重大的人口、文化和語言變遷。大多數移民是來自福建的閩南語使用者，其次是來自廣東的客語使用者，而客語也成為第二重要的語言。閩南語的優勢地位一直持續到戰後國民黨大舉遷臺。原住民的南島語語言因此持續衰退至今，許多且已走向滅絕。

#### 4.2.3 五十年的日本殖民統治

1895 年，清朝在甲午戰爭中戰敗，臺灣被割讓給日本帝國。日語雖然與漢語有部分詞彙共享，但無疑是一種外來語言，在接下來的五十年裡成為「事實上」的官方語言。殖民政府的國語政策最終目標是透過推廣日語作為全面優越的語言，將殖民地融入日本本土（Heylen, 2012, p. 33）。該政策經歷了三個強度不斷增加的階段：早期試驗階段（1895–1918 年）、同化教育階段（1919–1936 年），以及最終的皇民化運動，該運動從 1937 年日本入侵中國發動第二次中日戰爭開始，直到 1945 年臺灣被國民黨接收為止。在此期間實施了更加極端的語言政策，以增強臺灣人對天皇的忠誠，例如壓抑出版物和公共場所中的臺灣語言，同時也鼓勵臺灣人採用日本姓名，並在公共場所和家庭中使用日語。

在 1915 年的人口普查中，96% 的閩南裔人口使用閩南方言（葉高華，2018）。在 1935 年的人口普查中，79.75% 的人口為閩南裔，14.88% 為客家裔，5.37% 為原住民（王甫昌，1993）。在五十年的統治結束時，日語主要用於學校和政府機關；在其他公共場所與在家庭中，日語的使用並不普遍（黃宣範，1993，頁 36），僅約有 30% 的人口能夠說日語（葉高華，2018，頁 260）。在國民黨接收臺灣之前，臺灣的主要語言顯然仍是臺語，而非日語，會說華語的人很少。然而，由於從 1923 年到 1937 年有推廣書面華語的白話文運動（Heylen, 2012, pp. 96, 175），許多臺灣作家使用華語作為主要的書寫媒介（陳恆嘉，1996，頁 448）。

#### 4.2.4 國民黨接管之後

與日本的殖民語言政策相比，國民黨使用了相同的政策名稱「國語政策」，更為積極地推廣華語，不僅將其作為官方語言，實際上在 1987 年戒嚴令解除之前，華語是公共場所唯一的語言。解嚴也標誌著臺灣開始從威權統治轉型為民主開放。在這長達四十年的戰後時期，臺灣與中國大陸之間的交流完全中斷，嬰兒潮世代及其子女在不知不覺中創造了一種獨特的華語亞種，語言學界稱為「臺灣華語」。黃宣範在其 1993 年臺灣語言社會學的巨著中就宣稱：

臺灣地區不同的語族四十年來自然而然整合出來的國語已具有明顯而獨特的面貌。這個語言是我們應該自傲的語言（黃宣範，1993，頁 5）。

國民黨的政策有效地邊緣化了日語，以至於到了這個時期，日語在臺灣社會中已不再是一個實用的語言。本土語言也同樣受到壓抑，儘管程度較輕；復興本土語言的聲音和努力開始湧現。然而，所有本土語言要獲得國家語言的法律地位，還需要再經過三十年，直到 2018 年《國家語言發展法》才終於在立法院通過。

臺灣華語能在短短兩個世代內崛起並深深扎根的成功故事，除了自上而下有效的語言壓迫政策之外，還有幾個重要的社會語言學因素。第一個因素很明顯，即華語、閩南語（現在常用的名稱是臺語或 *Tâi-gí*）和客語都是漢語語族的語言因此有許多類型學上的相同特徵。此外，這三種語言也有相同的漢字書寫系統和非常相近的文化傳統，可追溯到數千年前。這些都使得大多數臺灣人學習和習得華語，比學習日語或英語等完全外來的語言要容易許多。

第二個關鍵因素，如何萬順（2009）所指出的，是戰後遷臺的一百多萬軍民所使用的語言極為多樣，這個重要的事實在相關研究中經常被忽略。因此，與廣泛流傳且被誤導的刻板印象相反，戰後來自中國大陸的移民絕大多數並非北京官話或所謂標準國語的母語使用者。表 4.1 顯示了 1956 年中華民國人口普查中 928,279 個外省人的原籍地。

表 4.1 1956 年臺灣人口普查中外省人原籍地（何萬順 Her 2009, p. 386）

本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%	本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%	本籍 Native Place	人數 No. of People	%
江蘇省 Jiangsu	95836	10.32	陝西省 Shanxi	6389	0.69	南京市 Nanjing	12491	1.35
浙江省 Zhejiang	114830	12.37	甘肅省 Gansu	1358	0.15	上海市 Shanghai	16179	1.74
安徽省 Anhui	44533	4.80	寧夏省 Ningxia	88	0.01	北平市 Beiping	7850	0.85
江西省 Jiangxi	30666	3.30	青海省 Qinghai	131	0.01	青島市 Qingdao	5777	0.62
湖北省 Hubei	36184	3.90	綏遠省 Suiyuan	383	0.04	天津市 Tianjin	5293	0.57
湖南省 Hunan	54154	5.83	察哈爾 Chahar	550	0.06	重慶市 Chongqing	994	0.11
四川省 Sichuan	36369	3.92	熱河省 Rehe	789	0.08	大連市 Dalian	600	0.06
西康省 Xikang	313	0.03	遼寧省 Liaoning	11220	1.21	哈爾濱 Harbin	490	0.05
福建省 Fujian	142520	15.35	安東省 Andong	1623	0.17	漢口市 Hankou	1618	0.17
廣東省 Guangdong	92507	9.97	遼北省 Liaobai	1773	0.19	廣州市 Guangzhou	924	0.10
廣西省 Guangxi	11620	1.25	吉林省 Jilin	2060	0.22	西安市 Xi'an	115	0.01
雲南省 Yunnan	5716	0.62	松江省 Songjiang	387	0.04	瀋陽市 Shenyang	2264	0.24
貴州省 Guizhou	4545	0.49	合江省 Hejiang	192	0.02	海南 Hainan	1817	0.20
河北省 Hebei	36124	3.89	黑龍江 Heilongjiang	556	0.06	西藏 Tibet	16	0.00
山東省 Shandong	90068	9.70	嫩江省 Nenjiang	479	0.05	蒙古 Mongolia	338	0.04
河南省 Henan	41674	4.49	興安省 Xing'an	98	0.01	未詳 Unknown	219	0.02
山西省 Shanxi	5282	0.57	新疆省 Xinjiang	277	0.03			

根據 *Ethnologue* 的資料，中國有數十個不同民族與近 300 種語言和方言，至少屬於九個不同的語系。雖然無法取得精確的數據，但事實是這些戰後來自中國各地的移民是眾多語言的母語使用者，而北京話或標準國語的使用者只佔極少數。因此，這些第一代外省人和同輩的本省人在面對北京話或標準國語時，都像是學習第二語言。何萬順（2009）因此認為，在國民黨的強壓政策下，臺灣的華語首

先經歷了大規模的涇濱語化（pidginization），深受本土語言（尤其是臺語）的影響，進而導致了嬰兒潮世代更大規模地經歷了類似克里奧語化（creolization）的習得過程。嬰兒潮世代幾乎完全在涇濱語化的華語中接受教育與成長，成為臺灣華語新生代的母語使用者。

#### 4.2.5 臺灣語言現今的面貌

經過七十多年的語言發展，臺灣華語除了是「事實上」的官方語言外，已在所有語言學層面實現本土化，並成為這片土地最主要的語言（何萬順，2010；Khoo & Her, in press）。更重要的是，臺灣華語也已形成一種可識別的華語變體，標誌著獨特的臺灣認同（蘇席瑤，2018）。

根據文化部對於《國家語言發展法》的解釋，華語和其他 20 種本土語言享有平等的國家語言地位；詳見表 4.2。

表 4.2 臺灣的國家語言

臺灣的法定國家語言	
手語(1)	臺灣手語
南島語族(16)	泰雅語、太魯閣語、撒奇萊雅語、噶瑪蘭語、阿美語、卑南語、達悟語、賽夏語、賽德克語、邵語、布農語、鄒語、魯凱語、排灣語、卡那卡那富語、拉阿魯哇語
漢語語族(4)	華語、臺語（閩南語）、客語、馬祖話（閩東語）

根據教育部所頒布的《十二年國民基本教育課程綱要》，除了這 21 種國家語言外，臺灣的九年義務教育中也正式承認表 4.3 所示的八種外國語言。

表 4.3 臺灣國民教育中認可的外語

臺灣國民基本教育認可的外語	
歐洲語言(1)	英語
東南亞語言(7)	緬甸語、菲律賓語、印尼語、高棉語、馬來語、泰語、越南語

英語為必修課程，而七個東南亞國家的官方語言則與 20 種非華語的國家語言並列為選修項目。學生必須從這 20+7 種語言課程中選擇一門。認可這七種東南亞語言並納入國民教育，主要是由於近年來從這些國家移入的大量人民及其所做出的貢獻。

因此，華語在所有國家語言中獨樹一幟，是學生在十二年國民基本教育中必須修習的唯一語言。在臺灣的語言景觀中，華語也是唯一在官方場域和基本教育中享有「事實上」官方語言地位的語言。正如蘭迪·鮑許在《最後的演講》中著名的話：「如果房間裡有頭大象，先介紹它。」介紹完華語這頭臺灣語言中的大象，下一節將論證正式承認其為官方語言的必要性。



### 4.3 支持華語為法定官方語言的理由

在臺灣藍綠的政黨政治中，關於語言意識形態的刻板印象是，中國國民黨領導的藍營更支持華語，而民主進步黨領導的綠營則更保護和支持其他本土語言。然而，我們將證明，在這種表面刻板印象之下，實際上是民進黨在執政時，更直接或間接地表達了支持將華語確立為法定官方語言的觀點。而國民黨似乎對華語「事實上」的現狀感到滿意，或許是他們認為沒有任何挑戰者會出現。

#### 4.3.1 民進黨第一次執政下的語言政策

2000 年，陳水扁所領導的民進黨贏得總統大選，結束了國民黨自二戰結束以來在臺灣政壇 55 年的主導地位。他最為人熟知的語言政策，是行政院在 2002 年名為《挑戰 2008：國家發展重點計畫（2002-2007）》的文件中提出的，其中明確指出「政府應在六年內將英語的地位提升到準官方語言」，並列出了具體措施。這樣的政策聲明清楚地表明，英語將獲得某種官方承認，並在官方場合和事務中發揮重要作用。一如預期的，此政策引發了一個質問：臺灣目前的官方語言是什麼？

時任行政院長游錫堃明確公開表示，雖然沒有法律認可，但不可否認的是，華語在使用和功能上已經是官方語言。更重要的是，他進一步建議臺灣應該效法 112 個在憲法中指定官方語言的國家，朝向這方面的修憲（沈如峰，2003）。值得注意的是，游錫堃的政治傾向從來都不是親中的；相反地，他是被中國列為「『臺獨』頑固份子」。<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.3.2 民進黨第二次執政下的語言政策

現任總統賴清德也是臺獨強硬派，但他在擔任臺南市長期間，推動的卻是英語成為臺南市第二官方語言的政策。鑑於華語毋庸置疑是臺南市事實上的官方語，在邏輯上賴清德要推動第二官方語言的先決條件就是認定華語是第一官方語。2017 年蔡英文總統任命他為行政院長，賴清德將這項政策帶進了中央政府。該政策因為學者的反對和兩黨立委的關注，兩次更名，先是在 2018 年更名為「2030 雙語國家」，在 2022 年又更名為「2030 雙語政策」。然而，在蔡英文總統的第二個任期內，雙語政策的推行仍在持續，而將英語列為第二官方語言的目標則退居幕後（何萬順，2022a）。換句話說，優先順序或許降低，但絕非放棄。

《2030 雙語國家政策發展藍圖》因此明言：「在檢視雙語政策的執行成果後，將於 2030 年後考量推動英語成為第二官方語言。」名為《2030 雙語政策》的官方文件進一步以「臺灣已掌握華語使用的優勢」為由，來合理化推廣英語的必要性。賴清德和蔡英文的雙語政策，無論是有意或無意，都明確地鞏固了華語是臺灣事實上唯一官方語言的地位，並間接地推動將其官方語言地位法制化，如此英語才有可能跟進。這一切都表明，即使是綠營的強硬派執政，不僅對華語作為法定官方語的概念感到自在，而且實際上一直在明確或間接地推動這個想法。

#### 4.3.3 教育部英語推動會的觀點

關於華語應成為法定官方語言的最佳且最系統性的論證，出乎意料地來自教育部一份 2019 年的研究計畫報告，該報告是教育部委託英語推動會所做。此委員會是行政院長賴清德在宣布推動英語為第二官方語言的國家政策後，於 2017 年 10 月由教育部依院長指示籌組成立的。該研究計畫的主持人和《我國英語成為第二

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<sup>2</sup> 這則新聞請見：<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-says-it-will-hold-supporters-taiwans-independence-criminally-responsible-2021-11-05/>

官方語言政策之評估報告》的主要作者，是委員會成員張武昌教授。這份報告精準地列出了國家以英語作為官方語言所應滿足的九項條件，如表 4.4 所示。

表 4.4 英語作為國家官方語言的條件

英語作為國家官方語言的條件	
1	具有英語的殖民背景
2	英語與該國之國語多屬同一語系
3	具備英語友善環境
4	已有現成的英文官方法令文件
5	英語為實用語言，不僅是學習的科目
6	龐大經費挹注
7	推行英語作為官方語言通常是基於國家存亡和種族團結的考量
8	已具備聽說英語、讀寫英文的文化思維和邏輯
9	國家運作及社會需求之相關文件已有英語化之基礎

這份報告極具說服力，充分證明了臺灣不符合其中任何一項條件。該報告的主要內容在 2018 年底作為教育部的建議提交給行政院長，然後才作為計畫結案報告於 2019 年提交。或許是在口頭報告時感受到賴揆的決心，報告最終提出了一項具體建議，建議政府若堅持朝其最終目標邁進，則應先「成立國家雙語及雙文化委員會或類似的語言推廣委員會。」賴揆非常重視這項建議，隨後解散了英語推動會，行政院則迅速通過了《雙語國家發展中心設置條例》草案，並立即送交立法院。如前所述，這項政策遭到藍綠陣營立法委員的關切，以及教師工會、學生團體和學術界的強烈反對。因此，該法案從一開始就在立法院面臨困境，目前正在各黨派之間進行協商。更詳細的說明，請參閱何萬順（2022a）和廖敏旬、何珮萱、何萬順（2024）。

因此，這份報告中提出的九項條件和最終建議，對於將華語法制化為官方語言的議題有重大意義，因為只需要將所有出現「英語」之處替換為「華語」，然後一一檢視結果，答案就會水落石出；詳見表 4.5。

表 4.5 華語作為國家官方語言的條件

華語作為國家官方語言的條件	
1	具有華語的殖民背景
2	華語與該國之國語多屬同一語系
3	具備華語友善環境
4	已有現成的華文官方法令文件
5	華語為實用語言，不僅是學習的科目
6	龐大經費挹注
7	推行華語作為官方語言通常是基於國家存亡和種族團結的考量
8	已具備聽說華語、讀寫華文的文化思維和邏輯
9	國家運作及社會需求之相關文件已有華語化之基礎

除了第七項條件確實需要一些說明外，其他八項都直截了當地反映了臺灣的真實情境，無需進一步解釋。所以，將華語作為官方語言，是否牽涉到臺灣生存和族群團結的考量呢？

首要的考量是生成式人工智能 (AI) 的出現，這項突破性科技的影響可能堪比工業革命，甚至更甚。然而，生成式 AI 在不同語言上的表現有所差異，因為存在著英語等高資源語言，以及發展中國家原住民語言等低資源語言（例如，Kshetri, 2024）。Choudhury (2023) 報告了一項由微軟公司研究員 Joshi et al. (2020) 進行的研究，將世界上的語言根據生成式 AI 可用的數位資源量分為六組。英語和華語是頂級組中的 25 種語言之一，該文稱為「贏家」(winners)。因此，華語是臺灣在 AI 時代生存和發展的寶貴資產；失去此競爭優勢是難以想像的災難。

其次，考慮臺灣的國民義務教育。以華語書寫的憲法在第 21 條規定：「人民有受國民教育之權利與義務。」憲法第 159 條更規定：「國民受教育之機會，一律平等。」何萬順 (2022b, 頁 15) 認為憲法保障的教育機會平等，在十二年國民教育裡被 2030 雙語政策所推廣的英語授課所侵害。

在國民教育中，華語文作為非語言科目的授課語文與學習工具，是最不具內建優劣勢、最不易造成階級複製的語文。試想，國民教育中非英語學科的教科書，例如社會課本，若以華文臺文夾雜、華文英文夾雜、全臺文或全英文的方式呈現學科內容，在起跑點上即造成部分學生的學習優勢與其他學生的先天劣勢，勢必遭教育部退審。但「雙語教育」所推動的正是以英語作為學科的課室語言與學習工具，正是一個製造不平等的政策。英語弱勢的學生原本僅在此單一學科的弱勢，立即複製於所有學科（何萬順，2022b, 頁 15）。

將華語定為法律上的官方語言，能有效消除十二年國民基本教育中因課堂語言選擇而產生的歧視。

最後但絕對同樣重要的是，請考慮國家與族群的團結。過去八年，蔡總統經常呼籲團結；同樣地，賴總統在勝選後也多次發出相同的團結呼籲。據我所知，這兩位民進黨總統所有關於團結的呼籲，都是以華語進行的。這是有理由的，因為政治人物無疑對語言選擇最為敏感和謹慎。一個絕佳的例子是，在 2024 年總統大選的唯一一場電視辯論中，候選人賴清德幾乎完全使用華語，顯然是為了吸引最廣泛的選民。然而，七個月後，身兼民進黨主席的賴總統，在民進黨全國黨代表大會上的演講中，全程使用臺語，這一語言選擇受到了反對黨的廣泛批評（林銘翰、張睿廷，2024）。顯然沒有其他語言比華語更適合臺灣的國家與族群團結。

或許只有關心語言的學者才會注意到，在民進黨政府推動華英雙語運動的過程中，來自深綠政治光譜的零星聲音不斷出現，例如臺灣基進黨，堅持反對華語，支持以臺語及其它本土語言作為第一官方語言。<sup>3</sup>這些微弱的聲音在綠營領導階層即無人理會，遑論其他陣營。基進黨在 2024 年選舉中的衰落與邊緣化，以及賴清德及其競選搭檔在電視政策發表和辯論中，使用華語遠遠多於兩位國民黨的對手，這些都是華語作為國家團結語言的重要指標。

最後，回顧報告中設立「雙語及雙文化委員會」的建議，這正是國民黨早先推廣華語的方法之一，也就是在教育部之下一直運行到 2013 年，因為目的達成而解散的「國語推行委員會」（Khoo & Her, in press）。

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<sup>3</sup> 在這篇臺灣基進黨的短文中，有三個顯而易見的諷刺之處。第一，整篇文章用華語寫成，而這正是這篇文章強力反對的對象。第二，至少有二十種其它的本土語言，但整篇文章訴求為「雙語」，因此把其它二十多種本土語言壓縮為僅僅一種。第三，該文主張華語是國際化的主要障礙，完全無視華語在人工智慧時代有高度資源的事實。

#### 4.3.4 小結

上述所有論點都匯聚在一個明顯的事實上，即華語已根深蒂固地成為事實上的官方語言，現在是正式承認這個現實的時候。一個恰當的比喻是一對已有數十年實際婚姻關係的伴侶，他們的家人、朋友和整個社會都將他們視為已婚夫妻，許多人甚至不知道他們並未合法結婚。與有合法婚姻的夫妻相比，唯一的區別是他們沒有結婚證書，這在某些時候可能會導致一些不便和誤解，這是可以理解的。儘管從一開始就有部分家人和朋友反對這對伴侶實質的夫妻關係，但最明智且一勞永逸的解決方案肯定是去辦理結婚證書。忽視現實不會改變現實，反而可能會強化現實。臺灣的華語就是這樣的情況。

二十多年前，前行政院長游錫堃敦促臺灣效法 112 個在憲法中指定官方語言的國家。<sup>4</sup>現在的民進黨政府應該在其語言政策中，默認華語為第一官方語言的同時，嚴肅考慮這位忠貞老同志的建議。

#### 4.4 預期的疑慮與反對

如果讀者被至今提出的理性論證所說服，因而認為改變華語的現狀是個簡單明瞭的問題，那就大錯特錯了。當文化部推動國家語言立法時，刻意迴避這個議題，而且從未有任何其他政黨正式提出此議題，是有原因的。任何熟悉臺灣語言政治和社會學的人都知道，這必然會是一個很有刺激性的議題。那些仍然把華語看成是中國壓迫本土語言的人，很可能會認為這是往他們永無止境的傷口上撒鹽，並憤慨地將這樣的提案視為壓垮駱駝的最後一根稻草。

在這樣的背景下，作為一名學者和公民，我將盡我所能，以理性的論證來回應預期的顧慮和反對意見。至於療癒受傷的心靈，則必須留給那些擁有權力和工具的人。

##### 4.4.1 華語已是國家語言

最有可能的反對意見是，在《國家語言發展法》之下，華語和所有其他本土語言已推定為具有同等法律地位的國家語言。換句話說，為什麼有必要單獨挑出華語，並賦予其不同的官方語言地位？直接的回答是，正如先前多次所述，華語已經是臺灣數十年來唯一實務上的官方語言，其他國家語言都沒有這種地位。更重要的是，華語作為國家語言的地位，實際上是值得質疑的，應該受到挑戰。

首先，我們必須承認《國家語言發展法》並未明確列出國家語言的清單；相反地，它僅給予國家語言的定義。華語符合該定義的看法，僅是文化部在其 2022 年《國家語言發展報告》中提出的非正式詮釋。<sup>5</sup>《國家語言發展法》第三條規定：「本法所稱國家語言，指臺灣各固有族群使用之自然語言及臺灣手語。」

首先要指出的是，很令人遺憾，該法條的官方英文翻譯竟然失真：「“National language” as referred to in this Act shall mean the natural languages and sign languages used by the different ethnic groups in Taiwan.」。首先，該法所指的手語特指「臺灣手語」，是大寫的專有名詞「Taiwan Sign Language」，並非小寫的複數普通名詞「sign languages」。此外，所指的族群必須是臺灣的「固有族群」，因此僅指歷史上或傳統上居住在臺灣的族群，所以近幾十年來移民到臺灣的東南亞族群並不包括在內。因此，更恰當的翻譯應是「native ethnic groups」，而非僅是「different ethnic groups」。雖然臺灣華語現在確實是在地化或本土化的華語變體，但我們能否因此

<sup>4</sup> 根據維基百科（見 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_language)），已有 178 個國家。

<sup>5</sup> 請見 [https://www.moc.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=167&s=95744](https://www.moc.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=167&s=95744)

推演出戰後的中國移民及其後代構成了「固有族群」？以下是文化部報告中給出的理由：「其目前人口數及代間數量已可視為固有族群之臨界點」然而，很容易就可以提出相反的論點，因為人口規模從來不是一個考量因素，某些原住民族群，如拉阿魯哇族和卡那卡那富族，人口都不到一千<sup>6</sup>，而大約 75 年內的三到四代人應該很難被視為「固有族群」。因此，就其相關族群而言，華語充其量是一個大有爭議的邊緣案例。

更重要的是，將華語列為國家語言會稀釋《國家語言發展法》的精神。首先，與其他國家語言不同，華語不需要進一步的保護、復振或記錄。因此，將其列為國家語言毫無意義。此外，《國家語言發展法》第四條規定：「國家語言一律平等，國民使用國家語言不得受到歧視或限制。」如果這種平等地位要被認真對待，並且在法律上也是如此（因為沒有理由不這樣），那麼所有 21 種國家語言都立即獲得事實上的官方語言地位，就像華語一樣。在《國家語言發展法》的立法過程中，時任文化部長鄭麗君曾多次公開強調，該法的目的不是要將國家語言確立為政府使用的官方語言。事實上，沒有其他語言擁有這種實質上的地位，而且也不可能在不久的將來擁有，這意味著所有國家語言在法律實務上並不平等，只要華語被視為國家語言，這就違反了該法。

最後，當教育部課程審議委員會在審議《十二年國民基本教育課程綱要》中的必修語言課程時，這種困境已經出現（林曉雲，2020）。《國家語言發展法》第四條第二項規定：「中央教育主管機關應於各級義務教育階段實施國家語言必修課程。」課程綱要已經將華語列為必修課程；因此，如果將華語視為國家語言，不需要再開設其他國家語言的課程，就已然符合法律規定。然而，實際上經過文化部的進一步解釋，國民教育中必須同時開設華語和至少一種其他國家語言的課程，再次反映了華語與國家語言格格不入的窘境。

因此，本文建議的是類似加拿大的模式，基於英語和法語已擁有的實際地位，該國在 1960 年代將英法二語立法為官方語言，並於 2019 年通過《原住民語言法》（Indigenous Language Act）賦予原住民語言國家語言的地位（Hudon, 2023）。臺灣已經有了正式承認國家語言的《國家語言發展法》，此外，還有 2017 年針對原住民語言的《原住民族語言發展法》（請見本書第一章論述）。下一個合乎邏輯的步驟是將事實上的官方語言，賦予法定官方語言的地位。

#### 4.4.2 華語：語言難題論（language-as-problem）

一個更實質且更容易理解的顧慮是，華語長期以來已被視為入侵所有其他本土語言的難題，甚至是敵人（例如，洪惟仁，2023；張學謙，2020）。難題需要被解決或修正，敵人更是需要被擊退或消滅。授予華語官方語言的地位，似乎會進一步強化其力量，使其成為對所有其他本土語言生存和復振的更大難題。

在語言政策與規劃（LPP）的研究領域，最具影響力的模型之一是 Ruiz（1984）的三種取向框架：語言難題論（language-as-problem）、語言權利論（language-as-rights）、語言資源論（language-as-resource），以及其近期的擴展（例如，Kaveh, 2023）。正如 Chang & Her（2024）所指出的，在民進黨政府的語言政策中，華語的角色是自相矛盾的，三種取向都被欲蓋彌彰地提及。在雙語政策中，它被暗示為像英語一樣擁有龐大資源，其權利也因列入國家語言而受到《國家語言發展法》的保護，但在推廣其他國家語言的使用方面，它又被視為一個難題。確實，華語兼具這三種角色，無需避諱。

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<sup>6</sup> 見 [https://www.cip.gov.tw/en/index.html#tab\\_16](https://www.cip.gov.tw/en/index.html#tab_16)

本文提議將華語列為官方語言，其權利，尤其是在國民教育方面，將受到保護，其資源，尤其是在 AI 領域，將得到加強。因此，唯一剩下的問題是，華語會不會變本加厲更像一個難題。將華語列為官方語言可能會風平浪靜，毫無影響；畢竟，除了形式上的地位之外，華語實質上的地位一直是官方語言。但實際上，這種改變更可能會引起巨大的反應。因此，本文將大膽論證，這樣的改變實際上可能反而會使華語不再是那麼難纏的問題。

首先，《國家語言發展法》是保障所有國家語言維護、復振和發展的最重要法律。從邏輯和法律上來看，華語在列或不列國家語言二者之間，必須做出選擇。不幸的是，文化部採取了簡單但卻不誠實的作法，使得國家語言的概念變得空洞。一頭強壯的大象和一條小小的河鱒被混為一談地要進行保護。這只產生了一種效果，即兩者都可能被忽視：如果必須假裝看不見大象，充其量也只能假裝看得見河鱒。這正是 2030 雙語國家政策下發生的情況，該政策從根本上與國家語言政策兩相矛盾（例如，何萬順，2022a）。

為了使臺灣在 2030 年成為雙語國家，根據定義，它將擁有兩種地位相等的優勢語言：在本政策中為華語和英語。然而，根據《國家語言發展法》的定義，臺灣是一個擁有至少 21 種語言的多語國家。更諷刺的是這兩項政策發生的時間點：《國家語言發展法》的立法和 2030 雙語國家計畫的規劃，幾乎同時發生在 2019 年初，彷彿彼此完全沒有關聯。在同一個政府之下，這兩個相互矛盾的政策，如果其中一個是認真且實在的，那麼另一個充其量只能是口惠而實不至（Chang & Her, 2024）。華英雙語教育和全英語授課（EMI）的積極實施，以至於自 2019 年至今，與該政策相關的新聞一直主導著教育議題。鑒於如此堪憂的情況，臺灣語文學會發起了公開連署，提出四項反對意見和兩項建議。<sup>7</sup>

#### **臺灣語文學會對於 2030 雙語國家政策的四項反對意見**

1. 「雙語國家」與「國家語言發展法」的精神背道而馳，嚴重忽視臺灣是多元語言社會的事實。
2. 「雙語國家」是價值錯亂的語言規劃，必然危及臺灣的主體意識，破壞臺灣的語言生態。
3. 「雙語國家」在教育體系中的規劃缺乏可行性，將會徒勞無功。
4. 「雙語國家」政策中的社會不公平及語言歧視問題。

#### **臺灣語文學會對於 2030 雙語國家政策的兩項建議**

1. 以「多語臺灣，英語友善」為目標，摒棄「英語國家」的幻想。
2. 規劃本土語言優先的「多語言國家」，達成生態永續的正面語言規劃。

欺騙會滋生更多欺騙，2030 雙語國家政策就是例證。《國家語言發展法》可以且應該是誠實且進步的語言政策，但將華語納入其中這個欠妥的決定，損害了其精神並削弱了其嚴肅性。政策的立場必須誠實，誠實才是上策。將華語從《國家語言發展法》的保護範圍中移除，將簡化該法的實施和執行，從而使所有合法的國家語言受益。誠實的語言政策也意味著臺灣承認華語為法律上的官方語言。

#### **4.4.3 馬太效應還是鯨魚效應？**

如果歷史能告訴我們什麼，那就是像臺灣這樣多語社會的語言動態正在不斷變化。《國家語言發展法》和 2030 雙語政策就是最好的例子。本文提出了一項變革的

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<sup>7</sup> 這份請願書最後有超過 1,700 位公民連署了，其中有超過 400 位是學者和教師。請見 [http://www.twlls.org.tw/NEWS\\_20220221.php](http://www.twlls.org.tw/NEWS_20220221.php)

建議。如果這項變革得以實現，有些人會擔心可能產生的馬太效應（*Mathew Effect*）：「凡有的，還要加給他，叫他有餘；沒有的，連他所有的也要奪去。」（馬太福音 25:29）。因此擔憂華語可能會對其他臺灣語言造成更大的危害。

然而，如同本文所論證的，結果更可能是相反，因為將華語從國家語言中移除，將釋放《國家語言發展法》的束縛，使其能夠發揮完整的法律潛力。正如本文開頭所述，雖然華語一直是唯一事實上的官方語言，但我們僅主張其成為官方語言之一，無意反對任何其他語言。任何其他語言的倡議者都可以採取同樣的做法，提出他們的論點與證據，供人民和政府考慮。因此，很可能反而會產生鯰魚效應（*Catfish Effect*）。

在挪威，活沙丁魚的價格比冷凍沙丁魚高出數倍，因其更好的質地和風味而受到重視。據說只有一艘船能夠將活沙丁魚運回家，而船長對其方法保密。他去世後，人們發現水箱裡有一條鯰魚。鯰魚不斷游動，沙丁魚則試圖避開這種掠食者。根據電影《非識不可(*Catfish*)》中的 Vince 所說，這種活躍程度的增加使沙丁魚保持活力，而不是變得遲緩。（鯰魚效應，譯自維基百科）

我認為，除非臺灣華語和臺語的角色互換，否則一些臺灣人民、學者和政治人物對華語的敵意和怨恨永遠不會消失。<sup>8</sup>然而，這些情緒和觀點往往隱藏在表面之下，不為公眾所見。本文的提議，若能攪亂一池春水，至少會引發討論和辯論，各種觀點，無論溫和或激進，都可以公開呈現接受人民的檢視。這本身就是一個充滿活力的民主應有的健康徵兆。如果該提案在法律上獲得通過，它也將為其它語言的奮鬥建立一條具體的途徑。

#### 4.5 建議與總結

本文提議臺灣應將華語作為官方語言的事實地位，轉變為法律上的地位，且針對此提案提出了論證，並試圖回答可能的反對意見。經過深思熟慮後的結論是，誠實方為上策，而誠實的做法是以華語為法定官方語言，而非國家語言，以使其他本土語言能在《國家語言發展法》下得到妥善的國家保護與推動。

在法律上，如果要以華語為法律上的官方語言，有兩種實施方案，一是透過憲法修正案，二是透過特別法。我再次建議採用加拿大模式，制定類似其《官方語言法》（*Official Languages Act*）的特別法（Hudon, 2023），且該法律的一個關鍵特點是為其他的官方語言留有空間。當然在立法之前，還有許多事情需要進行。

在立法院，一份《官方語言法》草案需要由行政院、立法院黨團或至少獲得 14 位其他立法委員連署的個別立法委員提出。最理想的途徑是透過全國性公民投票，這也是最具挑戰性的作法。因此，我建議最務實的方法：由黨團或獲得足夠連署的個別立法委員提出提案。無論哪種方式，在提案之前和之後，都需要強烈的遊說，以及來自學術界和媒體輿論的明確支持。

為了提高公眾意識並促進共識，相關各方應就此議題舉行會議或座談。最適合的專業組織是兩個最重要的語言學會：臺灣語文學會（TLLS）和臺灣語言學學會（LST）。在公眾和政治人物參與之前，語言專家先取得共識是至關重要的。

為了獲得全國性的關注和政府的支持，我認為進行討論的最佳公共論壇是「國家語言發展會議」。根據《國家語言發展法》及其施行細則，原則上應每兩

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<sup>8</sup> 一些極端人士將臺灣華語定性為中國語言，稱其為「中國語」或簡稱「中語」，字面意思是「中國的語言」。有些人甚至稱其為「支那語」或簡稱「支語」，故意使用貶義詞「支那」，這個詞是日本在侵略中國並於中日戰爭期間屠殺數千萬中國人時使用的。

年舉行一次，並在需要時召開臨時會議。自 2019 年 1 月 9 日《國家語言發展法》公布至今已六年，第一次會議於 2021 年舉行，第二次會議於 2024 年舉行。<sup>9</sup>在下次會議中，專門針對華語這頭大象的法律地位進行特別討論，將是理想之舉。

總而言之，在針對變更華語的法律現狀進行了上述論證之後，因為深知臺灣的語言政治以及在語言政策和政治正確的華麗言詞下那始終存在的虛偽，我僅僅期盼這篇文章能引起一些誠實的討論，以及健康、理性的辯論。

## 利益衝突聲明

作者聲明本章內容無相關利益衝突。

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<sup>9</sup> 兩次會議的所有簡報文字稿和其他資訊都可以在線上取得：<https://nldc.moc.gov.tw/home/zh-tw>



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